

From: Gene Diefenbach <cozmcdust@connectria.eop.gov> on 09/05/99 03:14 PM GMT

To: President@gateway
CC:
Subject: genetically engineered food

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[Sender Information]

PERSONAL-NAME: Gene Diefenbach
EMAIL-ADDRESS: cozmcdust@connectria
ORGANIZATION:
RELATIONSHIP:
STREET-ADDRESS: 7816 Weaver
CITY: Maplewood
STATE-PROVINCE: MO
ZIP-CODE: 63143
COUNTRY: U.S.A.

[Message Information]

PURPOSE: Offer neutral commentary, advice, or a suggestion
TOPIC: Agriculture
AFFILIATION: No Answer
SUBJECT: genetically engineered food

[Message]

Request for Legislation to Label Genetically Engineered
Foods

President Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton,

I am very concerned that I am eating genetically engineered foods without being told that fact. I am sending you this letter to insist that legislation be passed into law that will require genetically engineered foods to be labeled as such, regardless of whether the food is in its whole form or as an ingredient in processed foods.

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Genetically engineered crops are not the same as those produced by typical hybridization. The Food & Drug Administration (FDA), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are being negligent in protecting the rights of the American public in regards to genetically engineered foods. I am asking you to act legislatively to stop these agencies' neglect of public interest.

The FDA is allowing genetically engineered foods to come to market unlabeled although public opinion polls show a majority of Americans want them labeled. (81% in a January 11, 1999 Time magazine poll.) Last year the USDA even proposed to include genetically engineered foods in the definition of organic! The EPA is allowing the Bt bacteria (a valuable tool for organic agriculture) to be genetically engineered into the structure of plants. This could seriously undermine organic agriculture and cause significant human health and environmental problems.

Varieties of potatoes and corn are presently being sold that have been genetically engineered to contain the Bt toxin (*Bacillus thuringiensis*). The Bt toxin stays in the cell structure of the plants and is deadly enough to kill insects. We are being told these foods are safe for human consumption, but we have heard that before about DDT, EDB, and many other pesticides later shown to be cancer causing. I do not want to eat genetically engineered foods that contain the Bt toxin. Nor do I want to eat "Roundup Ready" soybeans or other future products such as tomatoes that contain the gene from a fish! But without labeling I cannot avoid it. So I am asking you to pass legislation to label all genetically engineered foods. Similar labeling legislation has already been passed in Europe and Australia.

Please write back to me and let me know if you intend to work to pass this legislation. Thank you!

Sincerely, Gene Diefenbach